



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
Veterans Health Administration  
Washington DC 20420

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**UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH'S INFORMATION LETTER**

**ETHICAL CONDUCT OF QUALITY IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES IN VHA**

1. This letter provides clinicians and managers with information about the ethical conduct of quality improvement (QI) activities in Veterans Health Administration (VHA) facilities.
2. While widely accepted ethical standards exist for various health care activities including medical treatment and research, there are no widely accepted ethical standards for the conduct of QI. A new report by the VHA's National Ethics Committee, *Recommendations for the Ethical Conduct of Quality Improvement*, is a preliminary attempt to fill that gap by providing a set of general recommendations for the responsible conduct of QI.
3. A Work Group has been charged with developing specific national guidance to correspond to these general recommendations. In the meantime, facilities are encouraged to review the report and consider whether ethical issues relating to QI are being adequately addressed. The report is available from the National Center for Ethics in Health Care web site at:  
<http://vaww.va.gov/vhaethics/download/QIReport.doc>.
4. Questions about the National Ethics Committee report may be directed to Ellen Fox, M.D. (10AE), Director, National Center for Ethics in Health Care, (202) 273-6926.

S/Robert H. Roswell, M.D.  
Under Secretary for Health

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